



USDA  
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# The COLORADO CONNECTION

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## Insights & Highlights

by  
*Allen Green*  
*State Conservationist*



**NRCS** has been working nationally on the development of a new strategic plan to guide the agency into the future. The plan identifies our business lines, products and services, customer segments, and sets forth very clear resources objectives. All of this is done under the mission of "Helping People Help the Land" toward a vision of "Productive Lands - Healthy Environment." While it reinforces the basic mission goals we have worked on over the past decades, it also sets out some new venture areas, and over-arching strategic approaches to match emerging resource issues and demographics.

We will be rolling out this new strategic plan in the coming months. I will personally be traveling around the state this spring and summer to spend some time discussing the plan and how what we do in Colorado fits with the agencies strategic direction. Once it is officially released, I encourage everyone to take the time to become familiar with it and share it with our partners and others. I hope that you will recognize and appreciate that the work you do on a daily basis has a clear purpose and direction and is critical to the agencies mission.

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*Helping People Help the Land*

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchased by the Montezuma Land Conservancy Reprint from the *Durango Herald Online*



**T**he Montezuma Land Conservancy has purchased an agricultural conservation easement on the 640-acre Bar TV Ranch near Mancos, protecting the ranch in the lower Mancos Valley for future generations. The easement is the first purchased by the Conservancy, which was formed in 1999 and has partnered with 22 other landowners to permanently protect nearly 7,000 acres.

The easement was made through a partnership of the Land Conservancy, an \$862,000 lottery grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, the NRCS Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and the Montelores Habitat Partnership Program.

The Bar TV Ranch is one of the largest operating livestock ranches along the lower Mancos River and a significant part of the Mesa Verde National Park view shed, according to Great Outdoors Colorado and the Montezuma Land Conservancy. It is visible from the San Juan Skyway and includes a 1 1/4-mile long riparian corridor along the lower Mancos River.

### Zig Ziglar on Reducing Stress

Many companies have long contended that stress in the home causes productivity loss in the market place—and it does. But research now reveals that stress on the job causes stress at home. In other words, they feed off each other.

More than ever, competition to remain competitive is an ongoing challenge. How do we increase productivity and reduce stress in both places?

The solution begins with sensitivity. Research indicates that workers have three prime needs: interesting work, recognition for doing a good job, and being let in on things that are going on in the company. If you look at those three things you'll discover that what the workers are saying is, "Treat me like a person, a human being, not like a number on the payroll. Make me feel important, and when you do, you'll discover that I will be a more relaxed, happier employee. As a result, my productivity will go up. My sick days from stress and stress-induced illness will decline. When all of those things happen I will arrive home at the end of the day a more contented individual, more apt to function well as a mate or parent, and handle my personal responsibilities with more efficiency."

What all this really means is that the individual will have a better balance in his or her life. A balanced life reduces stress. Feelings of guilt, which accompany failure either at home or on the job, will be reduced. Let's make others feel important.

ABILITY IS WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF.  
MOTIVATION DETERMINES WHAT YOU DO.  
ATTITUDE DETERMINES HOW WELL YOU DO IT.

- LOU HOLTZ

# Mike Johanns Visits Colorado

## *Secretary speaks at Annual Cattle Industry Conference*

By Rochelle Wimberly, State Office Visual Information Specialist/Webmaster

**USDA** Secretary **Mike Johanns** was in Colorado recently to address 5,000 cattle producers from across the nation at the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show. The four-day event is the nation's largest cattlemen's meeting. It features education, information, and networking opportunities, as well as individual and joint meetings by its sponsors, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB), the American National CattleWomen Inc. (ANCW), Cattle-Fax, and the National Cattlemen's Foundation (NCF).

Johanns discussed several issues of importance to cattlemen including international meat and beef markets, beef safety and health, fair trade, USDA assistance to farmers and ranchers, and animal ID. He noted that it was his second time speaking to the group -- the first time being at its 2005 Texas convention shortly after joining the President's team as Secretary of Agriculture. At that time, a fairly large portion of the international meat and beef market was closed and the Secretary promised to work to restore access to closed markets.

*"We have accomplished a great deal. Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan have resumed trade in various beef products. And Mexico took an additional step and opened their market to bone-in beef, a testament to safety to U.S. beef and confidence in the safeguards against BSE. I promise you that USDA will work to keep that confidence in the safety of our product and our scrupulous attention to our agreements that we have with various customers around the world,"* Johanns said.



USDA Secretary Mike Johanns (2nd from left) stopped by the NRCS Colorado display at the Cattle Industry Trade Show in February. He stands with (left to right) Area 2 Range Management Specialist Boyd Byelich, Area 3 District Conservationist Mike Daskam, and Area 1 Range Management Specialist Matt Barnes.

After addressing the group and answering several questions from the floor, Johanns walked through the exhibit floor and stopped by the NRCS Colorado display staffed by **Matt Barnes, Boyd Byelich, Michael Daskam, and Rochelle Wimberly.**

The convention started Wednesday, February 1, with the annual Cattlemen's College, a full-day of hands-on instruction and demonstration. Thursday and Friday were dedicated to committee and council meetings, forums, symposiums, and panel discussions. Secretary Johanns was Friday's featured speaker. The event concluded Saturday after board meetings, an awards program luncheon, and an incoming leadership reception. More than 280 leading companies in the cattle industry were onsite exhibitors, as well as the USDA agencies NRCS, Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. 💧



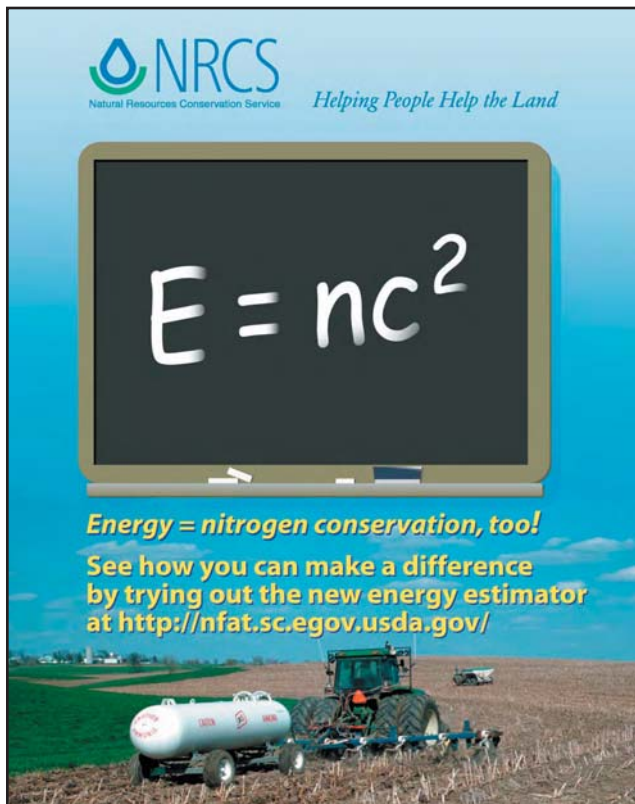
## What's New at [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov)

- ◆ **Computer Technology Applications & Information** is a new section on the employee intranet which provides training and user guides, calculators, PRS updates, maps, and other tools helpful to employees who utilize information technology applications in the performance of their duties.

Go to [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov). From the right side menu and beneath the *Information For* heading, **Click on "Colorado NRCS Employees."**

- ◆ **Colorado Bulletins:** Several Colorado bulletins which may require employee action:

Go to [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov). From the right side menu and beneath the *Information For* heading, **Click on "Colorado NRCS Employees."** From the intranet page, select **Online Directives** and then select **Colorado Bulletins**.



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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

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## Information Technology Highlights from the Colorado Technology Support Team

The Colorado Technology Support Team is a statewide, multi-disciplinary committee comprised of approximately 15 members whose purpose, as specified in a Colorado supplement to the General Manual, is to "provide recommendations for Information Technology components of the Colorado Strategic, Business, and Technology Plans." In this edition of The Colorado Connection, the Team introduces "**Tech Corner**," a feature column dedicated to highlighting information technology topics of interest to state employees.

Organized in 2003, the Colorado Technology Support Team was formed as a result of technology recommendations made during the strategic planning process. The Team meets quarterly and members review information technology needs from the field and all disciplines; evaluate current implementation, support, and training for information technology applications; and recommend appropriate actions. In addition, the Team maintains the state Technology Plan (a component of the state's business plan) by updating and adding action items and needs as they are brought forward and addressed.

Current Colorado Technology Support Team members and the discipline/Area they represent are: **Andy Steinert** (Soils), **Jeff Koster** (RC&D), **Jim Sperry** (DC), **Chris Pacheco** (Snow), **Rochelle Wimberly** (Admin and PAS), **Steve Jaouen** (Range), **Jerry Archuleta** (DC), **Joel Lee** (SC), **Ryan Altenburg** (Engineering), **Tom Weber** (SD Soils), **Barb Cencich** (ARC-T Area 1), **Paul Weber** (ARC-T Area 2), **Charles Pannebaker** (ARC-T Area 3), **Marianna Young** (ARC-T Area 4), **Mike Wall** (RC-T SD). Advisors to the team include **Chris Mueller** (GIS), **Dave Ueda** (ITS), and **Randy Randall** (Leadership Team).

Employees with information technology needs or concerns are invited to forward those through a member of the Team to be discussed at a future meeting. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Grand Junction on March 14. ◆

# Tech CORNER



## USING IPAQ & GIS IN THE FIELD

Submitted by: **Steve Jaouen**, State Tech Team

For the past year, NRCS state personnel have been experimenting with iPAQ Pocket PCs in the field. Applications range from engineering notetaking to development of ecological site descriptions. Most applications use GIS integrated with GPS in one form or another.

Pocket PCs use ArcPad (ESRI's mobile software) to view, take, and manipulate data in the field. Using Garmin GPS systems, users can manipulate data in the field to the exact location of the GPS. Now with Bluetooth wireless technology, the system is wireless from the iPAQ to the GPS (Figure 1). It's simple to create an inventory, measure, and plan systems all at once in the field. ArcPad's measuring tools allow you to measure straight lines, free hand lines, circles (great for pivots), and polygons while in the field with an image of the property right behind it (Figure 2).

The Glenwood Springs Field Office has been using these products to do on-site planning, practice checkout, and resource documentation (cultural resource, NEPA, range inventory). After taking field data, users return to the office and fine tune the data using ArcGIS or other relevant software. The information can then be loaded into Toolkit or PRS if needed.

By using this system the Glenwood Springs Field Office can walk the field and complete documentation and planning on-site. This allows personnel to be more accurate by spending more time in the field and less time behind the computer. Most documents utilizing Word, Excel, Acrobat, etc. can be loaded on the iPAQ and opened and completed while on-site.

Anyone interested in this technology and how it may help you in the field, should contact their Area Resource Conservationist for Technology. 🍀



Figure 1: Blue Tooth Technology allows for wireless communication between iPAQ and GPS



Figure 2: ArcPad measuring tools as viewed on an iPAQ



State Technology Support Team member Steve Jaouen is a Range Management Specialist in Area 1's Glenwood Springs Field Office.



## Getting the Conservation Message To Farmers & Ranchers

By Jeanette Colville, Area 2 Public Affairs Specialist

Agriculture is king every January at the three-day Colorado Farm Show in Greeley. It is one of the oldest and largest farm shows in the nation. More than 35,500 folks from across the High Plains attended this year's show to meet and talk with the 350 exhibitors and to attend a variety of ag industry education and guest speaker presentations.

The Greeley Field Office teamed up with the West Greeley Conservation District to meet with visitors and provide information to help them improve their farm and ranch operations, and to improve their economic growth. District volunteers helped man the booth, and the District focused on a strong presentation of their seedling tree program to help landowners learn more about how the program reduces wind and water erosion, provides wildlife habitat, creates noise barriers, and provides visual screens.

*"We help farmers and ranchers by providing conservation technical assistance," said West Greeley Conservation District Manager Nick Hoban, "along with cost-share programs and a variety of products to help folks improve soil quality, improve water management, and improve their agricultural productivity. That's our focus year-round, not just at the Farm Show. The great thing about the Farm Show is that it gives us an ideal opportunity to talk to operators we haven't met before, as well as a chance to visit with our long-term cooperators."* 🍀



West Greeley Conservation District Manager Nick Hoban holds the box of tickets for the annual seedling tree drawing while Tina Booton, Weld County Weed Division Supervisor, picks the winner.



Colorado Farm Show visitors were greeted by (left to right) Area 2 Range Conservationist Nick Trainor, Weld County Weed Division Supervisor Tina Booton, and the West Greeley Conservation District Manager Nick Hoban. Dave Sharman, (behind Tina) retired NRCS Resource Conservationist and Weld County rancher, stopped by to visit.

## Tamarisk Control Demonstration Project

District Conservationist Mike Rich and Soil Conservationist Larry Kawanabe, both of the Cortez Field Office, recently participated in a Tamarisk Control Demonstration Project in Montezuma County. The pair joined sixteen volunteers to work on the project where tamarisk was cut and the stumps sprayed with herbicide. The project is sponsored by the Dolores Soil Conservation District and the Dolores River Tamarisk Action Group. 🍀



Volunteers work at the Tamarisk Control Demonstration Project in Montezuma County.

# Kids Expo Shares Fun, Knowledge

By **Mark Cronquist**, Area 2 Small Acreage and Resources Coordinator

**H**ave you ever built your own river? Have you had a “worm’s eye” view of what goes on below the soil’s surface? Maybe you’ve been a pile of snow and been measured to see how much water you contain. Approximately 247 fourth grade students and 28 teachers and parent volunteers from schools in Brighton and western Adams County experienced just that at the 2006 Farm Day Kids Expo held in early February at the Adams County Regional Park facility. Sponsored by Adams County Farm Bureau, Adams County Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program, and Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters from Brighton and Weld Central High Schools, the Farm Day Kids Expo provided participants with twelve different stations where they learned, in a very hands-on way, about various aspects of natural and agricultural resources including water, soil, crops, and livestock.

Staff from the Brighton field office, as well as staff and members from Boulder Valley, Longmont, Platte Valley, Southeast Weld, and West Adams Conservation Districts facilitated four different programs including: *Rivers and Riparian Wetlands*; *SnoTel: Measuring the Water in Snow*; the *Soil Tunnel*; and *Ways to Irrigate Farm Land*. Some of the other stations taught students about livestock identification, weaving, and electrical safety. Staffers taking part in the event included:



Lyle Smialek explains irrigation.



Bob Warner gives a presentation at the Riparian Trailer.

**Jan Fritch**, District Conservationist, Brighton Field Office

**Michelle Pace**, Assistant, Brighton and Greeley Field Offices

**Nancy McIntyre**, Boulder Valley Conservation District Manager

**Mark Cronquist**, Small Acreage and Resources Coordinator, Brighton Field Office

**Bob Warner**, Vice President, West Adams Conservation District

**Ron Ditson**, President, Platte Valley Conservation District

**David Rippe**, Southeast Weld Conservation District

**Lyle Smialek**, Southeast Weld Conservation District

As students rotated from station to station, FFA guides quizzed them about what they learned, and students received play money for correct answers. At the end of the day, an auction was held and students bid on different items using the money “earned” during the day.

According to **Tom Fey**, Adams County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development, “*This event helps kids learn where food comes from, and they’re surprised by the endless number of ways agricultural products and by-products are used. For instance, we wouldn’t have computers without cows and sheep. We want to make sure they understand the importance of agriculture in their lives.*” 🌱



# on the pulse

## Area Office News

### Area One

**Paul Billig**, rangeland management specialist in the Craig Field Office, held a demonstration of the Routt County Conservation District's river trailer to Moffat County third graders at their annual campout in September. Camp was held at Sherman Park in Routt National Forest. Other participants included the Colorado Department of Wildlife and the Craig Hot Shots firefighters.

### Area Two



Roy Hall presents Mike Petersen with a plaque commemorating his 25 years of service in Area 2.

**Water Management Specialist Mike Petersen** was roasted and toasted as he bid farewell to thirty-three years of government service with NRCS at a recent lunch ceremony in Greeley. Mike has spent

the past twenty-five years of his career in Area 2 working with agency folks, state and Federal partners, and landowners to improve soil quality, water management, and irrigation practices across northeastern Colorado and throughout the High Plains region. Area Conservationist **Roy Hall** recognized Mike for his dedication and his passion for his work, *"No one has shown more enthusiasm and dedication to their work than you have, Mike. We're going to miss you."*

**Rich Mullaney**, NE Colorado RC&D Coordinator, was one of the organizers of the first Alternative Enterprise and Rural Tourism Conference, "Planting the Seeds for Success," held in Brush this February. Numerous successful entrepreneurs spoke at the conference, representing such businesses as wagon rides, horse riding lessons, and prairie chicken tours. **Merle Rhoades**, director of the Colorado Small Business Development Center Network System, led a panel on business planning which included how to start a business, give it the best chance of survival, and how to deal with customers and employ-



The Northeast Colorado RC&D Council exhibit provides information about their website.

ees. In addition to the opportunity to network, participants also learned about legal issues, marketing, and trade show exhibits and how to improve them.

**The Flagler Conservation District** recently held their annual dinner and business meeting to review the past year's accomplishments and to identify conservation opportunities in the year ahead. The annual meeting is also a time to recognize and reward outstanding conservationists of the year and the youth conservation poster contest winner. This year's meeting was attended by **Danyel Brenner**, aide to **Senator Allard**, and **Debbie Carlstrom**, aide to **Representative Musgrave**.



Congressional Aides, Danyel and Debbie, participated in a discussion of Farm Bill programs and conservation opportunities with a group of 75 at the Flagler CD annual

### Area Three

**Rick Romano**, Canon City Field Office, and **Janet Barnhart**, Fremont Conservation District, set up the "Backyard Conservation" exhibit at the 3rd Annual Bird-N-



## The Colorado Connection

Nature Expo held in Canon City. The Expo, sponsored by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society, brings resource people from Southeast Colorado together, giving Rick and Janet an excellent opportunity to meet with a variety of local people and answer resource-related questions. About 250 people meandered through the displays, including exhibits by the Bureau of Land Management and the Division of Wildlife.



Janet and Rick provided hand-outs and resource conservation information to attendees of the Bird-N-Nature Expo.

Marvin Watson, Eads Field Office, was one of two people named Kiowa County Outstanding Teammates for 2005 by the Colorado State Forest Service. Watson chairs the Eads Tree Board, and helps with all aspects of tree planting projects in the town of Eads, Kiowa County, and surrounding counties. He also presents annual Arbor Day and Tree City USA programs.



Marvin, left, stands for a picture with co-award winner Vern Harris, a Kiowa County Commissioner.

Raquel Wertsbaugh, Pueblo Field Office, gave a presentation in LaJunta recently at the Colorado Birding Trail meeting. Colorado Birding Trail is a major ecotourism initiative to promote wildlife recreation, conservation of natural resources by private landowners, and a diversified income for rural economies. Wertsbaugh discussed Farm Bill programs for wildlife and how they

can benefit landowners involved in this new initiative.

## At the National Western Stock Show



Don Ament, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture, presented the 2005 CACD Conservationist of the Year award to Lawlor Wakem, Teller-Park Conservation District Supervisor.



The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, along with the help of many volunteers, gave watershed demonstrations using the Teller-Park CD river and riparian study center.



Sally Lobel, Jefferson County CD, and Vern Vinson, Teller-Park CD helped out during the demonstration of the river and riparian study center.

The El Paso County CD and Colorado Springs Field Office have teamed up with a larger group of interested community members to contribute to the development of a \$13 million memorial museum at Fort Carson. NRCS and the CD will plant a tree memorial and are working to raise funds. NRCS will provide a site design plan, drip irrigation design, and species selection.



Proposed location of tree planting memorial at Fort Carson.

## Area Four

Cynthia Purcell, San Juan Conservation District Manager, and Jerry Archuleta, District Conservationist in the Pagosa Springs Field Office, are working with the Stollsteimer Watershed steering committee to provide Archuleta County with recommendations to update their current land use and development codes. The county is experiencing rapid growth and has asked for input as they begin revising code in order to address important aspects of watershed protection such as domestic water supplies, wildlife, erosion and sediment control, and education. Final adoption of revised codes is expected in May.

"Innovative" best describes the water conservation/keyboarding lesson Pagosa Springs 6th grade teacher Heidi Keshet developed for her technology class! After attending the CACD Teacher's Workshop, Keshet used rope to construct a mock river system of the San Juan River, with tributaries, on the school's front lawn. Inlets and outlets along the route were labeled, a bucket of water poured in at the headwaters, and more water (some contaminated with food coloring) was added/subtracted along the river's course to Lake Powell. Students recorded the water's path and used the data in the classroom to learn how to graph it using their keyboarding skills. Keshet has since become an active board member of the San Juan CD.

# on the pulse

## State Office News

**NRCS will host a conservation contest** for all elementary schools in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) district. The contest recognizes schools that have incorporated natural resources and environmental issues into their curriculum. The submitted applications are judged by a team of environmental representatives from NRCS, FSA, Forest Service, Colorado Department of Agriculture, and the Jefferson Conservation District. The winning school will receive a trophy presented by the Governor and be designated the 2006 Earth Day Elementary School of the Year. The award will be presented on April 21, 2006.

**NRCS is hosting a statewide coloring contest** for grades K-5. Each Area Earth Team Coordinator will mail entry forms to participating schools. This is a great way to expose kids to Earth Day and our environment. The entry deadline is March 31, 2006. Entries will be judged and a winner from each Area and from each grade level, plus an overall state winner will be selected to win a cool prize. Winners will be awarded on or before April 21.

**A two-day mentor/mentee training** was held in the State Office in late January. More than 20 volunteer mentors and mentees attended the training aimed at providing insight and additional skill in communication and relationship building. The first day of training, for mentees only, was devoted to

examining roles and responsibilities and the benefits and opportunities of the State program. On the second day of training, matched mentor/mentee pairs participated in a half-day class of interactive exercises and discussions. The Mentoring Program is still recruiting for volunteer mentors. For more information, contact **Henry Jackson** at 720.544.2825.



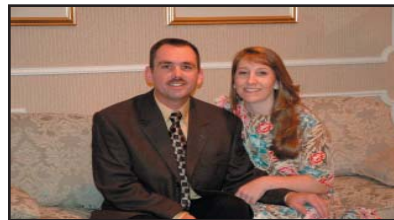
**Mentor/Mentee pairs:** State Budget Officer Lynn Hahn and Secretary to the Admin Officer Sandra Green. Area 4 Resource Conservationist Ted Lucero and Area 4 Soil Conservationist Michael Gonzales.

**Welcome Tracie Leigh, new** Human Resources Assistant. She is a long-time government employee who comes to NRCS from the USFS Job Corps. At Job Corps, Tracie was responsible for providing human resources services to employees of five centers in Colorado. Prior to working for Job Corps, she worked for the Department of the Army's Adjutant General's Office for many



years, and also has worked for the Department of Justice. Tracie is a native Coloradoan who graduated from Lincoln High School in Denver. She has two daughters and a delightful 1-1/2 month old grandson, **Dwight**. When not doting on her grandson, she enjoys yard work.

**Welcome Bethany Mills, the** new Contracting Officer. Bethany has many years of Government service and comes from US Army Corps of Engineers in Wiesbaden, Germany. In Germany, she was primarily responsible for International Construction contracts. Her work took her from Israel to Malta and lots of other places in between. Before that, Bethany was a contract specialist at Fort Carson. Bethany returned to Colorado so that she could be near her family who live in Arvada and Colorado Springs and also so her husband, **Rich**, could return to his previous private sector job in Denver.



**Bethany, Rich, and Aspen, their yellow lab, hope to enjoy the many hiking and biking trails in Colorado.**

## Employee Spotlight



**Kimberly Diller** started her career with NRCS in 1987 at the Byers Field Office as a Conservation Technician Aide. When she started attending Colorado State University as a full-time student studying Range Ecology, she worked as a Student Trainee in the Greeley, Fort Collins, and Longmont Field Offices. Upon graduation Diller went south and worked in Alamosa as a Rangeland Management Specialist for about seven years.

Diller currently works in the Canon City Field Office, serving as a Rangeland Management Specialist for the Upper Arkansas Watershed. She offers technical assistance and program support to field office staff and their customers, providing conservation planning on range and pasture lands and rangeland expertise concerning other resource issues. She is also instrumental in conservation education and outreach, facilitating workshops and submitting news articles to the local paper. She frequently assists Ben Berlinger, Area 3 Rangeland Management Specialist, with youth outreach to the Society for Range Management (SRM) High School Youth Forum, Future Farmers of America (FFA) range judging contests, and natural resource camps such as Camp Rocky and Black Mesa.

Diller's career has been interesting. Along the way she worked in Wyoming as a Resource Conservationist and a District Conservationist, wrangled horses, performed grounds maintenance, and worked the family farm. Life happens as careers are built, too. Diller is married to Dan, plumber and fly fisherman extraordinaire, and has two daughters: Regina, a student at the University of Wyoming and Karla, a student at Canon City High School. She's made friends and danced a little. She sings and plays several musical instruments, but that's the rest of the story...

*(continued on page 12)*

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### *Colorado Springs and Pueblo Field Offices Helping with Peak to Prairie Project*

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**T**he Colorado Springs and Pueblo Field Offices are part of a large group of organizations working on the Peak to Prairie Project in El Paso and Pueblo counties.

The landscape in the two counties is increasingly threatened by development. The Nature Conservancy and Colorado Open Lands are conducting a study that will identify the most important biological resources and create a conservation plan for critical resources, including wetland and riparian habitats and agricultural properties. The resulting study data will guide the project.

The vision for the Project is to conserve this large, intact, functioning natural landscape to benefit the local economy and preserve habitat for nature. Peak to Prairie aims to maintain military and agricultural uses, keep historic ranches intact while conserving critical plant and animal habitats, and provide extensive opportunities for recreational access.

The Project area spans from Cheyenne Mountain and the Aiken Canyonlands across Highway 115 and Interstate 25 to include Fort Carson to the Chico Basin.



Pueblo and Colorado Springs Field Office staffs are the primary contacts with private landowners. Other partners include The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Open Lands, Colorado State Parks, El Paso and Pueblo Counties, and Fort Carson. ●



## ...The Rest of the Story

By Rochelle Wimberly, State Office Visual Information Specialist/Webmaster

Most of their gigs are pretty close to home, but last summer they had the rare opportunity to take a road trip for a performance in Iowa. They stopped for lunch in a small park in Nebraska and had a leisurely meal while one of the gals strummed and sang her idea for a new song. They were about to pack up and start back on the journey, when a lady who had been sitting on the other side of the park came over and said she had noticed they were playing music. She asked if they would be willing to play a few tunes for her clients, a group of developmentally challenged adults on an outing for the day. She had arranged for a small combo to come to the park and entertain her charges, but the combo had failed to show up. It seemed to her like the 'Gals' were heaven sent. Would they just play a couple of songs, she pleaded. The Rocky Road Gals said yes and while they played and played, a very appreciative and wonderful audience clapped, danced, and sang along. The Gals all agree that the little gig in a Nebraska park was one of the most rewarding they've ever performed.

A double mother-daughter duo, The Rocky Road Gals feature NRCS's **Kimberly Diller** and her daughter, **Karla**, along with Farm Service Agency employee **Kathy Gaylord** and her daughter, **Kelli**. They have been performing together since July 2004. Their unique style and three- and four- part harmonies result in music that is uniquely powerful. They say they have been all over the map with different types of music but have settled comfortably into what they call their "blue-thing"-bluegrass and a little bit of everything else!

Kimberly, the rhythm guitarist and Kathy, who has just taken up bass guitar, work hard to keep up with the seventeen-year-old girls, Kelli and Karla. Kelli is the fiddler and flat picker, and Karla plays mandolin. It's the remarkable talent and love for music that the teenagers bring to the gal group that makes up the heart of this band.

The Gals produced and released their first album in 2005, and recently performed at the *Summer Gospelgrass Festival* in Loveland. Most of their gigs are closer to home in Canon City where both Kimberly and Kathy work at the USDA Service Center. They've performed at some of Colorado's noted musical festivals, including *Bluegrass on the River*, *Orchard of Hope*, *Fiddlers on the Arkansas*, and the *Happy Apple Farm Fall Festival*. They've also performed at the Rainbow Trails Lutheran Camp Advent-Fest and for the Canon Rose Acoustic Society. This summer they are again booked to play at *Bluegrass on the River* and *Orchard of Hope*, and will perform at two USDA partner events -- the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts' Camp Rocky and the Soil and Water Conservation Society's National Conference in Keystone.

It could be that the Gal's trip to Iowa wasn't really about an out-of-town gig at all. But about an unplanned lunch, in an out-of-the-way park, in a small town in Nebraska, where a lady was hoping for a miracle, and four showed up. In any case, the Rocky Road Gals are the rest of the story when it comes to NRCS's Kimberly Diller, and the beginning of another one we're likely to hear about again. ♦



The Rocky Road Gals from left to right: Kathy Gaylord, Kimberly Diller, Karla Diller, and Kelli Gaylord. Their new album can be purchased directly from the Gals.

## On Diversity

### Your Colorado Civil Rights Advisory Committee

Submitted by **Steve Park**, State Soil Scientist  
State Civil Rights Advisory Committee Chair

The Colorado Civil Rights Advisory Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the State Conservationist (Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer) to promote effective affirmative action that is consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by management. The committee provides feedback on the Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights program, and makes recommendations for improvement. Recommendations are also made regarding policies and procedures as they affect equal opportunity in Colorado.

The major duties and responsibilities of the committee fall into three major categories: recruitment, training, and promotion. The committee recently reviewed and updated the recruitment program materials. To improve recruitment and retention of new employees, the committee worked with Human Resources to develop a mentoring program in Colorado. The committee reviews training programs and

makes recommendations to ensure that equal opportunities for training are available to all employees. Training opportunities are geared towards enabling employees to perform their assigned duties and prepare for career advancement. The committee also reviews personnel selections to determine if personnel regulations are being applied without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, marital status, or any other non-merit reason.

Your Colorado Civil Rights Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from each administrative area, the state office, the special emphasis program managers, and advisors from the administrative management staff. Openings for the committee occur on an annual basis, and members normally serve for a term of three years. Employees interested in serving on the committee should contact their immediate supervisor. ♦

### Black History Month

National Black History Month was the idea of Black American scholar and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson. He was one of the first Black Americans to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. In 1922, he gave up his career as a university professor to dedicate himself to research and writing on the African American experience. Among his publications are *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*; *History of the Negro Church*; *African Heroes and Heroines*; and perhaps his most famous book, *The Miseducation of the Negro*. Woodson argued that the African American experience was a worthy subject of study. He called for a time when the "hidden history and culture" of American peoples could be celebrated. In 1926, Woodson declared Negro History Week. Over time, Negro History Week evolved into the Black History Month that we know today - a four-week-long celebration of African American History. [Click here](#) to read the National Black History Month Proclamation by the President. ♦



### NRCS 2005 Civil Rights Outreach Award presented to Northeast Colorado RC&D

The NRCS Colorado 2005 State Civil Rights Outreach Award was presented to **Rich Mullaney**, Northeast Colorado Resource Conservation & Development Area Coordinator. The award reflects excellence in developing and implementing an outreach plan that effectively communicates a broad range of NRCS programs and opportunities to all segments of society in the RC&D area.

The Civil Rights Advisory Committee selected Northeast Colorado RC&D Council for its active record of working in partnership with communities and other agencies to promote economic growth throughout the RC&D area, which encompasses Sedgwick, Phillips, Yuma, Logan, and Morgan counties. Examples of the Council's outreach efforts include a Wind Farm Workshop, the Colorado Rural Development Forum, the Republican River "Living on the Edge" Riparian Workshop, the Tri-State Hometown Competition for Youth, and a planning committee for an upcoming Alternative Enterprise Conference.

"Our RC&D Council has taken a big step forward in letting others know who we are and what we do," said Rich, "and in order to capitalize on this effort, we are committed to continuing with an even greater effort in the year ahead." ♦

## Branson High School Student Receives Honors At International Range Management Convention

By Ben Berlinger, Area 3 Rangeland Management Specialist

**K**aitlyn Lingus, a Branson High School student, was recently awarded third place honors for her presentation at the 59th Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management (SRM). The Colorado Section SRM chose Kaitlyn, the daughter of Branson ranchers **Nick & Shari Lingus**, to participate in the High School Youth Forum (HSYF), an SRM sponsored youth activity held jointly during this year's annual meeting held February 12-16, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Kaitlyn's presentation, titled *One "Mite"y Mission*, was based on a study she conducted over the past two years, both in the greenhouse and in the field, to determine the effects of a new biological control agent for the suppression of field bindweed. The biological agent she used in her study was the Bindweed Gall Mite. From her study, Kaitlyn concluded that biological control using Bindweed Gall Mite will be an effective option in the control of field bindweed that threatens productivity on rangelands throughout the state of Colorado.

Kaitlyn was thrilled with her 3rd place honors. The top winners were recognized in front of the entire SRM membership attending the annual convention in Vancouver. In addition to competing in the presentation contest, Forum participants went on a local ecological field tour and were given a program on communication skills.

Each year volunteers from the Colorado Section SRM Student Affairs Committee conduct the program and provide technical and financial support for students they send to the SRM Annual Meeting. Besides the Committee, other organizations that provided financial support for Kaitlyn were the Branson-Trinchera Conservation District, local ranchers and businesses, and the Branson Public School/Vocational Agriculture Program.

The 21 individual SRM sections from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico choose delegates to the HSYF based on their high degree of interest in the range and natural resources field, as well as on their exemplary dedication and effort to learn more about rangelands. While at the HSYF, delegates have the opportunity to meet people from many countries and get a first-hand view of SRM, including its organization, goals, and the role it plays on a world-wide basis.

SRM is an international organization that strives to promote public awareness of the importance of sound management and use of rangeland, the world's largest land base. In 1966, SRM recognized a need to involve youth with the rangeland related activities and education provided at its annual meeting. Since that time, the HSYF has been a highlight of the SRM annual meetings. ♦



**T**he La Jara Field Office is assisting producers in aeration/renovation and seeding on irrigated meadows.

Most irrigated meadows have an oxygen deficiency due to the surface being inundated for extensive periods of time by water. The build up of undecomposed residue (peat layer) reaches a level where it ties up nitrogen and reduces grass growth. Renovation is the mechanical disruption of compacted surface soil and sod-bound vegetation. It increases aeration and organic matter decomposition and targets improved

production through released nitrogen.

An aerator is used to renovate the meadow with a broadcast seeder. The implement has two 20" rollers with several 5" shanks which penetrate the surface. The shanks fracture the soil compacted surface and shallow root mat (peat layer). By using this aeration implement, hay meadows improve aeration in the soil, increase water intake, and fertilizers penetrate the root zone. Hay meadows can increase yield by 40-60%.

Avoid using a renovator during drought years, and harrow after broadcast grass seeding and irrigate immediately after aeration to get best management results. Use aggressive productive grasses for best results. ♦



## Seedling Tree Planting Workshops Spread the Good Word on Conservation

By Jeanette Colville, Area 2 Public Affairs Specialist

The Double El Conservation District conducted two tree planting workshops in January as part of their annual conservation seedling tree program. The program provides an opportunity for farmers and ranchers to develop windbreaks and shelterbelts to reduce wind and water erosion; to create wildlife habitat, noise barriers and visual screens; and to establish living snow fences to capture moisture for crop and range lands.

*"We like to offer these workshops every year because we have a lot of new people move into the area that are not from this region,"* said Double El Farm Bill Conservation Technician **Ben Hendrix**, *"so they're not aware of the harsh environment we have. They also aren't aware of what species of trees or shrubs do the best in this area, or in the different soils that we have."*

District staff and NRCS technical specialists helped attendees identify which species to plant and helped them with designs for planting the windbreaks and shelterbelts on their homesteads and farms.

*"We demonstrated important survival aids such as weed barriers, polymer, rabbit guards, and drip irrigation,"* said Ben, *"along with an educational slide presentation at each workshop showing design alternatives for windbreaks, and the variety of types of trees and shrubs available."*

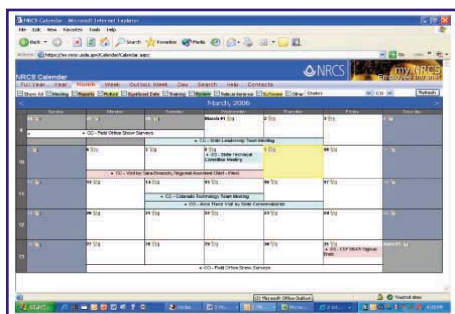


*Planting living snow fences is a team effort, and is an investment in long-term conservation planning by reducing soil and wind erosion, protecting lives, and retaining water resources.*

The workshops, held at the District Office in Simla and at the Miami School, were well attended with fifteen participants at the Simla workshop and twenty-one at the Miami workshop.

The Conservation District tree program offers a low-cost alternative to large-scale tree plantings, making it a popular conservation program throughout the Double El Conservation District.

*"Hopefully by showing folks at the workshops what's available to them in aids such as drip irrigation system, polymer, and weed barrier, along with soil types, water management, and plant varieties, we can help make their plantings more successful,"* **Ben** went on to say. ♦



A quick visit to the **my.nrcs calendar** and you'll be informed of all the trainings, meetings, and teleconferences scheduled for NRCS Colorado this month and in the months to come. You can also see what's happening in other

States. To have your event listed on the calendar, [click here](#) to download the Calendar Request Form from our State's website.

WHETHER YOU  
THINK YOU CAN  
OR WHETHER YOU  
THINK YOU CAN'T,  
YOU'RE RIGHT.

- HENRY FORD

## CSP Rewards Palmer Ranch for Stewardship On Rangeland

Submitted by Mary Miller, Area 3 Public Affairs Specialist

*"It's been kind of a long process, but it's a lot simpler than what we thought when we started,"* said rancher **Don Palmer** about signing up for the 2005 Conservation Security Program (CSP). The Palmer Ranch, operated by Palmer, his brother **John** and his wife **Sandi**, as well as parents **Marie** and **Bob**, is located in the Rush Creek Watershed. The family applied for CSP since they were already doing conservation work that fit into the program.

In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the Palmers were part of a group of Kit Carson and Cheyenne Wells ranchers who thought along the same lines when it came to rotational grazing and other aspects of ranching. The group met monthly and traveled to different ranches to see and discuss various ranching operations.

To keep costs at a minimum, the Palmers started with the grazing system that they had on their 12,000 acre ranch and just added additional fencing and water from there.

Today their system consists of the summer rangeland where there are 11 different pastures with a water source for each pasture. In recent years with less rainfall, they keep the cattle on individual pastures an average of six-to-eight days, depending on the condition of the pasture. For the year, the cattle are on each pasture between 12-14 days. This gives the pastures approximately a 70-day rest period during the growing season.

*"We've let our winter pasture rest during the growing season for the most part,"* said Don. *"If we do use it, such as we did this past summer, we just do a quick one rotation through the rangeland."* Pastures on the winter rangeland, which is in the sand hills, are split in half with a one-wire fence that is taken down after summer use. During the winter months, they then have bigger pastures. All but one of their summer pastures that they sometimes use in this sand hills area of the ranch has water.

The ranch's water source is on a high point



Don Palmer and Brian Johnson, Area 3 District Conservationist, discuss rangeland conservation.

on the northeast side of the ranch. From here the gravity-flow system takes the water to supply tanks and stock tanks dispersed throughout the pastures.

With their current system--installed without any cost-share assistance--the Palmer's qualified for Tier I in CSP. By putting a water development in the one summer pasture and then cross fencing it, they will move up to Tier III.

Don sees many benefits in using a rotational grazing system. *"The first thing we noticed was a change for the better in the grass,"* he said. *"It made us realize we were doing the right thing."* In addition, handling the cattle more has "gentled" them down. Finally, Don said he knows how much grass they have ahead of them instead of just going out one day and seeing it's all gone.

*"CSP offers one of the best opportunities to inform, educate, and reward land users' stewardship efforts on their land,"* according to Area Conservationist **John Knapp**. *"The great thing about this program is that it offers opportunities to guide land users through a process of learning not only where their operation stands but also the potential for what they can achieve."* ●

# The Origins of Earth Day

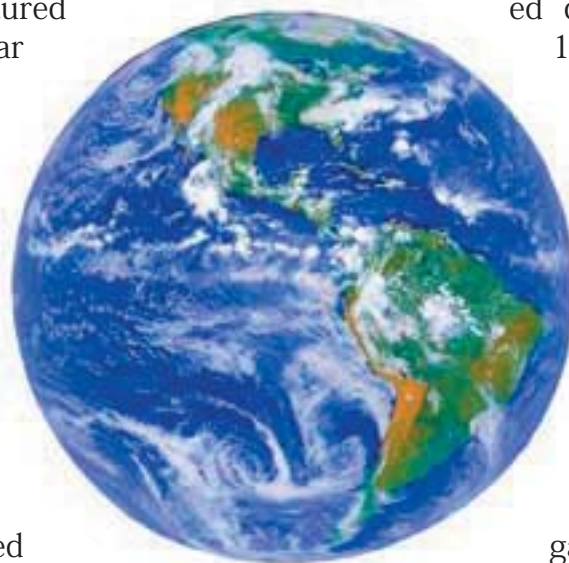
Submitted by **Sandra Geer**, *Area 1 Administrative Coordinator*

**A**pril 22nd each year marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement which began in 1970.

The first Earth Day represented the culmination of growing public concern over a series of well publicized environmental disasters in the late 1960's. In 1969 for instance, a stretch of the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, caught fire as a result of industrial waste. That same year, an oil rig ruptured off the California coast near Santa Barbara and poured 200,000 gallons of crude oil into the ocean. In response to the public's demand for action, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first Earth Day celebration. By some estimates, 20 million Americans participated on that first Earth Day, joining together in demonstrations designed to place the environment on the national political agenda. Citizens took to the streets to protest the destruction of the planet. They filled classrooms and auditoriums to strategize about cleaning up their communities. Politicians fanned out from the Capitol, leaving Congress to shut down for the day while they returned to their constituencies to stump about the environment. The demonstrations successfully put the issue in the mainstream of American politics.

American Heritage Magazine called the inaugural Earth Day "one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy." Its exhibition of widespread environmentalism

set the stage for the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the adoption of major environmental laws such as the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts as well as the landmark legislation for the Endangered Species Act. On April 22, 1990 more than 200 million people in 141 countries participated in Earth Day celebrations.



The popularity of Earth Day started declining as typified by the 1994 celebrations which drew less than one million people.

Environmentalists say that this is largely due to the fact that the movement had achieved the goals it set for itself in 1970.

The amount of oil spilled in the nation's waterways, for instance, had dropped from 22 million gallons per year during the mid-1970's to just 2 million gallons in 1992. As a result of

such improvements, environmentalists say it is increasingly difficult to mobilize people to address the movement's new goals such as reducing "greenhouse gas" emissions.

To help a younger generation understand Earth Day, the **Colorado Earth Team Committee** sponsors a coloring contest to help pique the imagination and interest of elementary age children. Some schools have initiated programs such as the Young Earth Trustee programs, where students are challenged to do something: pick up trash, recycle, plant flowers etc. Kids are learning to accept responsibility and to realize that everyday is Earth Day. ♦



## Protecting the Tarryall Watershed

Reprint from the *Ute Pass Courier*, Norma Engelberg, Writer



**W**ith \$10 million either spent or obligated, documentation of the various watershed projects in Park County has become extremely important to projects pending or started in the rest of the state, including Teller County.

*“The Tarryall Restoration Project is our pilot program,”* said **Dieter Erdmann** of Colorado Open Lands (COL) and chairman of the South Park Wetlands Focus Area Committee. *“We’ve taken a monitoring approach to justify the amount of money we’re spending in this area so there is a higher amount of monitoring than usual.”*

The committee performed a pre-project survey to document what is happening along the Tarryall, studying stream morphology — its physical geology — and plant types in the interface between the stream and the land around it — the riparian zone. *“This level of monitoring demonstrates our long-term commitment to this project,”* Erdmann said. *“And we can determine how effective our work has been and will be.”*

Monitoring also determines the best time of the year to do the work when water flow is down and plants are dormant.

*“The Tarryall is about 10 linear miles long, but it’s about 20 miles on the river,”* Erdmann said. *“Some areas are high quality and don’t need any work. Others need our help. We’re not just restoring the streambanks, our goal is to improve water quality.”*

The committee also is working hard to keep the Tarryall off the federal impaired-river list. *“The South Platte is listed as an impaired river,”* Erdmann said. *“That means the federal government can come in and regulate roads and other uses. We don’t want to lose control of the Tarryall.”*

The South Park Wetlands Focus Area Committee recently earned the USDA Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Caring for the Land Stewardship award. It is a partnership of 15 different agencies and organizations. Park County is a major player in this partnership, which came together to conserve and restore the Tarryall and other waterways in the county. **Gary Nichols**, Community Development Director for Park County as well as its Director of Tourism, has been working with some of the other partners to develop projects and find funding through grant-writing and matching fund donations.

Money for projects has come from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), for example — \$5 million for the Tarryall Restoration Project and \$3.5 million for overall South Park Heritage Project, some of which went for 16 conservation easements. Another \$1 million came from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Funds also have come in from other state and federal programs and the county itself, as well as private organizations such as Trout Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Colorado and others. The value of in-kind work has also added to the total value of the projects.

COL is also part of the watershed restoration process as one of the grant writers for various projects, as a donor and in seeking ranchers who are willing to create conservation easements out of their ranches.

One of COL’s goals is to balance the needs of all the different land users. *“We work with the agricultural community to make land use more efficient,”* Erdmann said. *“We want to see the whole watershed managed in a way that will benefit everyone involved. The ranchers need to be able to make a living, but the*

*continued on page 19*

*continued from page 18*

*area also has hunting, fishing, tourism, water users, and others who have an interest in the work.*

One of the programs, which benefits both ranchers and fishermen, is South Park Fly Fishers. The group was established in 2003 *“to provide public fly-fishing opportunities on secluded ranch properties,”* its brochure states. It was formed with a GOCO grant and offers seven miles of stream access at prices ranging from \$25 to \$50 a day per angler. This represents a large savings over the rates offered by private fishing club memberships, said **Leon Kot**, district conservationist for NRCS in the Teller-Park Conservation District office. For information about fly fishing on private land call 719-748-1494 or visit [www.southparktrout.com](http://www.southparktrout.com).

COL also helps conserve the watershed by determining which areas would be most damaged by development. *“We can’t stop development but maybe we can keep its impact to a manageable level,”* Erdmann said. *“Sometimes it’s two steps forward and one step back when it comes to getting conservation easements.”* He said COL has had some success in convincing some land owners of the value of such easements and also has been able to raise funds to buy land for conservation.

In fact, according to its Web site, [www.coloradoopenlands.org](http://www.coloradoopenlands.org), COL has been instrumental in protecting 14,542 acres in the South Park Basin through 17 projects. This intermontane grassland basin, one of three in Colorado, is home to *“over 200 miles of stream and riparian habitat and globally rare grassland community,”* the Web site states, adding that some of the plant species in the basin can be found no-where else in the world.

Kot said his office would like to see similar projects started in Teller County, adding that some projects may be able to piggyback on projects already started. *“The money is out there for these kinds of projects,”* he said. *“We just have to find more people to write the grant applications — it’s a complicated and time-consuming process. There is a lot of documentation involved.”*

He added that not only do these watershed and wetland projects help with conservation and water quality, they also serve a social purpose because many of the projects involve prison inmates at the Colorado Department of Correction’s Buena Vista Correctional Facility through the Vocational Heavy Construction Technology Program.

Kot said the inmate-program costs are minimal — workers are paid 16 cents an hour and the cost of using the equipment is small. *“Inmates in the program learn to use heavy equipment so they can get work in construction when they get out of prison,”* Kot said. *“They work on the stream banks and learn a trade and it doesn’t cost us hardly anything because the Colorado Contractors’ Association foots most of the bill.”*

Kot said there are number of cost-share programs in place for residents of Teller and Park counties. *“For example, if you need to put up a fence to keep cattle out of a creek or you want to build a duck pond, there’s cost-share funding for that,”* he said. *“Just call me.”* The Teller-Park CD also sells seed mixes to land owners for planting on areas damaged by, among other things, construction and fire. Call 719-686-9405 for more information about these and other NRCS programs.

The Colorado State University Cooperative Extension office also has information on land conservation, conservation ranching, and other land-use issues. Visit the CSU Extension Web site at [www.answerlink.info](http://www.answerlink.info).

Other projects completed in the area include the 11-Mile Canyon river restoration work and other restoration and rehabilitation work by the U.S. Forest Service and the Coalition for the Upper South Platte; Colorado Division of Wildlife work on the South Platte from Antero and Spinney reservoirs with the correctional facility program; and a partnership between CUSP, USFS and the Denver Water Board to thin the forests and rehabilitate and restore burned areas on the DWB properties in Jefferson and Douglas counties to protect the South Platte watershed. ♦

## Upper Arkansas Weed Effort Draws Praise

*Acres of noxious weeds and tamarisks have fallen.*

Reprint from the *Pueblo Chieftain*, Tracy Harmon, Writer

The Upper Arkansas Regional Weed Management Coop is a gold medalist in the world of weed warfare. For the second time in the group's eight-year existence, a Colorado Weed Management Association partnership award has recognized the weed warriors for their outstanding teamwork.

It is no wonder, considering the group has mapped more than 10,500 acres and treated more than 5,000 acres for noxious weeds. In addition, the warriors have annihilated about 350 acres of tamarisk trees along the Upper Arkansas River and its tributaries in hopes of nipping the spread of the water-thirsty trees' seeds at the source.

"I travel all over the Western United States for weed programs and I have yet to see as complete a weed management program as the one we have here," said Larry Walker, Chaffee and Lake County weed supervisor. "It's probably one of the better programs in the country."

The key to the group's success is cooperation. The coop attacks noxious weeds and tamarisk trees on a watershed basis in an eight-county region that includes Pueblo, Fremont, Huerfano, Custer, Chaffee, Lake, Park, and Teller counties.

Because every conceivable land management agency is involved, boundaries are erased and "our reach is broad," Walker said.

Jane Wustrow of the NRCS's Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council is the glue that holds the group together.

"Our strategic plan was to generate funding support for education, preven-

tion, and to targeting weed management," Wustrow said. "We have gotten about \$300,000 in grants through RC&D and that does not include the other counties and agencies funding."

So an estimated \$750,000 to \$900,000 has helped the coop attack weeds on the ground and through education of landowners.

One of the group's biggest projects recently has been to target tamarisk trees, also called salt cedar, which are blamed for drinking more than their fair share of water.

"One day I was driving between Canon City and Dodge City, Kan., and I conducted a windshield survey on salt cedar trees. Based on an average width I conservatively estimated that those trees would drink 700,000 billion gallons a year," Walker said.

Where some jurisdictions had trouble establishing a test plot for salt cedar removal, it was easy for the coop because Fremont and Custer County Weed Coordinator J.R. Phillips offered his 3,000-acre ranch on Hardscrabble Creek as a site for testing. Those tamarisk are some of the oldest seed source in the state, Phillips said.

The coop was the first in the state to try spraying tamarisk using helicopters. Now in the final year of a three-year \$50,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to target salt cedar management, the group has treated 325 acres and is pleased with the results.

But the tamarisk are just one pest that faces extinction at the hands of the weed warriors. They also have received grants to target

three varieties of knapweed, leafy spurge and toadflax, just to name a few.

"Those weeds have been reduced by the 70-80 percent range in my counties (Lake and Chaffee)," Walker said.

The weed warriors take the time to target the non-native weeds that are invading property and taking over where more preferable grazing plants usually grow. If the weeds win, that's bad news for agriculture and wildlife managers alike because animals such as cattle and elk are getting less healthy forage to eat.

The weeds also can be bad news for birds and even the insects which many animals rely on as a food source. It is hard to target weeds whose tiny seeds spread to new locations via water drainages, wind, or even the tread in car tires.

Besides using herbicides, the weed warriors also employ bio-agents such as sheep, goats and insects that eat the unwanted weeds. For example, flea beetles were released in Fremont County to control leafy spurge and with the help of a 4-H entomology club, the insect's progress is being recorded to gauge the effect.

Each fall the group also hosts an educational forum for both private and public property managers so they can learn the latest about scientific approaches and the use of herbicides in treating unwanted weeds.

For information, contact Wustrow at 719-543-8386 x 4. ♦





# Nationally Speaking

## JOHANNIS ANNOUNCES NITROGEN FERTILIZER

Agriculture Secretary **Mike Johanns** announced the release of USDA's Energy Estimator for Nitrogen, a web-based awareness tool that farmers and ranchers can use to identify potential nitrogen cost savings associated with major crops and commercial nitrogen fertilizer applications.

*"The Energy Estimator for nitrogen provides our nation's producers with another new tool to reduce their energy costs and protect the environment,"* said Johanns. *"Encouraging proper fertilizer management is part of USDA's comprehensive energy strategy to help farmers and ranchers mitigate the impact of high energy costs."*

The Energy Estimator for Nitrogen estimates savings in nitrogen fertilizer applications and use to help farmers and ranchers make practical and sound decisions regarding nitrogen fertilizer use on their farm or ranch. This is the second

tool USDA has developed as part of its overall energy strategy to mitigate the impacts of high energy costs and develop long-term solutions for agricultural producers. Last December, USDA released its first web-based tool - the "Energy Estimator for Tillage" - to help farmers and ranchers calculate diesel fuel use and costs associated with various tillage practices.

Additional information about USDA's Energy Estimator for Nitrogen can be found at <http://nfat.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

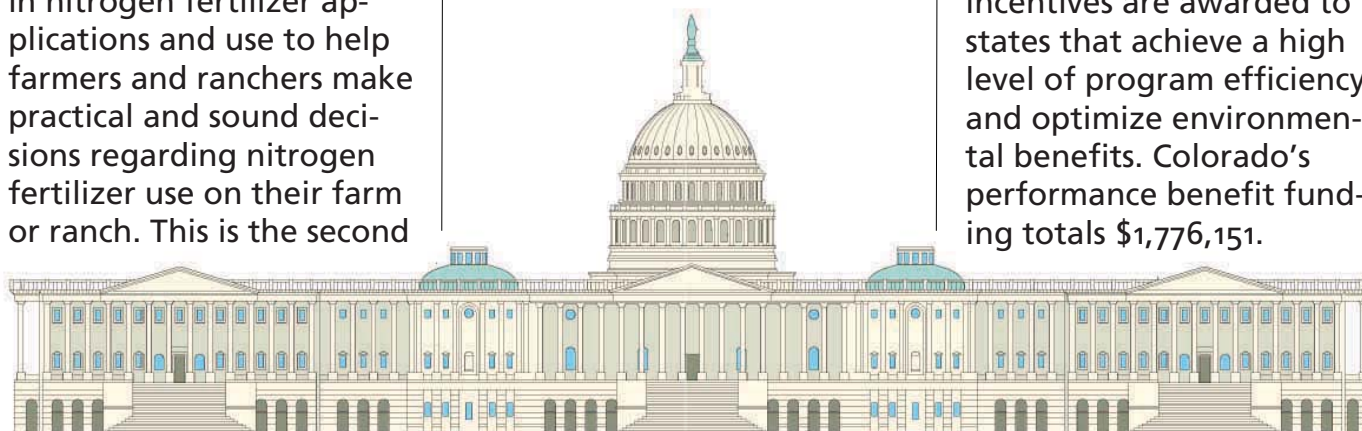
## MALAYSIA OPENS MARKET TO U.S. BEEF

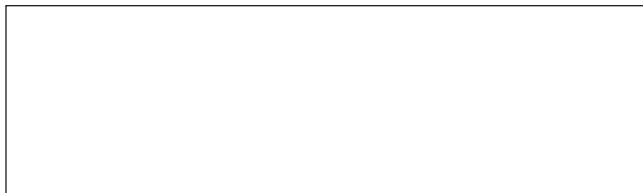
Agriculture Secretary **Mike Johanns** announced that Malaysia will resume imports of U.S. beef and beef products.

*"I'm very pleased with the reopening of the Malaysian market to U.S. beef and beef products,"* said Johanns. *"Today's announcement is another positive step in our efforts to resume normal U.S. beef trade around the world that follows science-based international guidelines in food and animal safety. We look forward to building on this opening to expand product coverage and exporter eligibility."*

## ADDITIONAL \$56.8M FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Chief **Bruce Knight** has announced that \$56.8 million in funding for conservation programs has been provided to 43 states for their high levels of participation and performance in implementation FRPP, WHIP, EQIP, and WRP in fiscal year 2005. Performance incentives are awarded to states that achieve a high level of program efficiency and optimize environmental benefits. Colorado's performance benefit funding totals \$1,776,151.





The COLORADO CONNECTION  
Colorado's Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter  
Jan-Feb 2006

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To submit news for publication, contact: Rochelle Wimberty, Colorado Connection Editor at 720.544.2990 or E-mail: [rochelle.wimberty@co.usda.gov](mailto:rochelle.wimberty@co.usda.gov). Materials submitted may be edited for content, clarity, style, and space.